

City of Muskegon
City Commission Worksession
October 12, 2009
City Commission Chambers
5:30 PM

MINUTES

2009-82

Present: Commissioners Warmington, Shepherd, Gawron, and Spataro.

Absent: Commissioners Carter, Wierengo, and Wisneski.

Appraisal Services.

In an effort to avoid a lengthy and costly property tax appeal, the new owner/developer of the Shoreline Inn properties has approached the City with the concept of mutually selecting an independent appraiser to set the value for the property. The property owner and city would share appraisal costs and agree to the independently determined value. Staff believes this is a cost-effective approach and will save attorney fees, interest charges and other costs associated with a lengthy appeal. Moreover, if a traditional appeal were pursued, the city would still have to hire an appraiser due to the complexity of the properties.

Staff recommends approval not to exceed \$12,500.

This item has been placed on the October 13, 2009 Commission meeting for consideration.

Sewer Rate Adjustment.

City staff is recommending a 25% retail rate increase to be effective January 1, 2010. The request is based on the recent announcement that Sappi Paper has announced it is permanently closing the Muskegon mill operation and the state has announced closing of the Muskegon Correction facility. Muskegon County has announced it will raise wholesale sewer rates to municipal customers by an initial 15%.

This item has been placed on the October 13, 2009 Commission meeting for consideration.

Charter Amendments.

The following proposed charter amendments have been placed on the November 3, 2009 ballot for consideration by the electors.

1. Charter amendment providing for changing the dates for submission of the budget and adoption of budget by City Commission shall be established by ordinance.
2. Charter amendment allowing City Commission to change fiscal year by ordinance.
3. Charter amendment to eliminate the Charter-provided date by which the annual appropriation resolution needs to be adopted.
4. Charter amendment to provide that the composition, sessions and regulations of Board of Review would be as provided by law.

5. Charter amendment to eliminate primaries for Mayor and City Commission.
6. Charter amendment to repeal the provisions dealing with Civil Service.

A link has been placed on the City website explaining each proposed amendment and a brochure has been created for distribution.

Personnel Code.

The City Manager distributed a potential personnel code if Civil Service is eliminated. A link will be placed on the City website.

Walgreens Liquor License.

Mayor Warmington will attend the appeal process for the Walgreens liquor license in Lansing on November 3, 2009.

Temporary Liquor Licenses.

Tony Kleibecker, Public Safety Director, and Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, Planning and Economic Development Director, stated the amount of temporary liquor licenses has increased dramatically this year. The demand on staff time has made it difficult for staffing. Several suggestions were made to help the situation including raising the fee for temporary liquor licenses.

Staff will put a list of proposed changes to present at a future meeting.

Smith Ryerson Park Improvements.

This is a request to authorize staff to negotiate with the lowest based bid, Lakewood Construction, of Holland, Michigan on the Smith Ryerson Park Improvements project.

This item has been placed on the October 13, 2009 Commission meeting for consideration.

Many Commissioners stated they thought it better to re-bid the project based on inconsistencies within the bid and the total amount of all bids was higher than the budgeted amount.

Equalization Office Move.

General consent was given by the City Commission to allow Equalization to move to the Muskegon County building.

Mona Lake Watershed Presentation.

The Mona Lake Watershed Council is seeking permission to use part of the City's property for low impact storm water management to keep storm water from blasting downstream through the Peerless Plating site.

Motion by Commissioner Spataro, seconded by Vice Mayor Gawron to authorize a letter of support and refer future agreements to staff.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Ayes: Gawron, Shepherd, Spataro, and Warmington.

Nays: None.

MOTION PASSES

Any Other Business.

Audience members were invited to participate.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Spataro, seconded by Commissioner Shepherd to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION PASSES

**Ann Marie Becker, MMC
City Clerk**